

JFK PROBE

Assassination Board Wants To Look at Records From Military Intelligence

BOSTON (AP) — For years, people probing the mysteries of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy have focused their attention on the files of the FBI, the CIA and the Secret Service.

Now, a federal commission trying to locate records related to the assassination is also looking into whether clues may be held by military intelligence agencies.

"Some of the agencies felt they had disclosed" all the records that they had, said John Tunheim, chairman of the Assassination Records Review Board. "Now, they're finding records they weren't aware that they had."

The board was created by Congress in 1992 to quell any lingering fears that the truth isn't known about the shooting in Dallas that shook the world on Nov. 22, 1963.

Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested for the murder but was killed before he could be questioned extensively. An investigative commission headed by then-Chief Justice Earl Warren decided that Oswald acted alone.

But conspiracy theories flourished and live on to this day.

The board is seeking out new materials that may be related to the assassination and reviewing records that government agencies want to keep secret.

Places the board is looking include the intelligence branch of the U.S. Army and the National Security Agency, which is a branch of the Defense Department.

"The NSA, other military intelligence agencies are groups that

we're just starting to work with," Tunheim said.

Tunheim said the NSA had released some records and was "back searching for more" at the board's request.

"This matter cannot be resolved without coming to terms with the material intelligence agencies have, especially the military intelligence agencies and the NSA," said board member Kermit Hall.

Assassination researchers said those agencies have been reluctant to release information in the past.

Philip Melanson, a professor at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth who has written a book suggesting that Oswald had ties to U.S. intelligence, said some researchers believe the Army has a lengthy file on Oswald that has never been released.

Melanson said he hoped the board would be able to get access to previously undisclosed records.

"This board has a lot going for them," he said, noting the board was appointed by President Clinton and is working under a law passed because the public has lingering questions about the case.

The Army, Navy and NSA press offices had no immediate comment yesterday.

The board held a State House hearing yesterday to collect testimony from experts on where they should look for evidence.

Assassination researchers suggested everything from looking into the archives of the late Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to finding out whether the presi-

dent's autopsy at Bethesda Naval Medical Center was captured on a tape recording.

Among the witnesses testifying was Priscilla Johnson McMillan, who interviewed Oswald when he was a defector in the Soviet Union in 1959 and later interviewed his widow and wrote a book on them.

"He was stunningly young," she said. "He looked like a very young boy and I felt very sorry for him."